

Message Text

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ORIGIN SS-15

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /016 R

66011

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APPROVED BY EUR/NE:JJCROWLEY

EUR-MR. EWING

S/S-O-MR. OTTO

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R 100246Z MAR 76

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY LONDON

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 050303

EXDIS

FOLLOWING REPEAT STATE 050303 ACTION BONN INFO OSLO 2 MAR 76

QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 050303

EXDIS

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SV, UR, NO, GW

SUBJECT: THE SVALBARD

1. VINE BRIEFED GERMAN MINISTER HANSEN FEBRUARY 27 ON THE BROAD LINES OF OUR APPROACH TO THE QUESTIONS POSED IN THE NORTHERN ARCTIC WATERS. HANSEN HAD PREVIOUSLY INDICATED THAT THE FRG GOVERNMENT, IN THE COURSE OF ITS STUDY OF THE SAME ISSUES, WOULD HAVE AN INTERAGENCY MEETING IN EARLY MARCH TO EXAMINE GERMAN POLICY IN THIS AREA.

2. VINE NOTED THAT THE AREA WAS SENSITIVE AS THE ACCESS POINT FOR THE SOVIET FLEET AND BECAUSE OF INSTALLATIONS
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IN THE KOLA PENINSULA. IT WAS ALSO THE NORTHERN-MOST

PART OF THE NATO AREA. OUR GENERAL VIEW WAS THAT NO DESTABILIZING ELEMENTS BE INTRODUCED INTO THE AREA.

3. VINE INDICATED THAT THERE WERE THREE GENERAL QUESTIONS WHICH WE ADDRESSED IN OUR OWN STUDY: (A) THE SITUATION ON THE SPITSBERGEN ARCHIPELAGO; (B) PROBLEMS RELATING TO THE WATERS BETWEEN SPITSBERGEN ARCHIPELAGO AND NORTHERN NORWAY; AND (C) THE TALKS BETWEEN NORWAY AND THE USSR ON THE CONTINENTAL SHELF BOUNDARY DELIMITATION.

4. WITH RESPECT TO SPITSBERGEN ITSELF, OUR GENERAL VIEW WAS THAT THE STATUS QUO BE CONTINUED, WITH NORWEGIAN SOVEREIGNTY EFFECTIVELY EXERCISED IN THE ARCHIPELAGO. WE WERE GRATIFIED BY THE RECENT DEBATE IN THE STORTING AND THE MEASURES THE NORWEGIANS HAVE INDICATED THEY WILL TAKE TO IMPROVE THEIR ADMINISTRATIVE EFFECTIVENESS. WE BELIEVE THAT CONTINUED EFFECTIVE NORWEGIAN ADMINISTRATION AND THE STRICT APPLICATION OF THE DEMILITARIZATION CLAUSES OF THE SPITSBERGEN TREATY IS IN THE INTEREST OF ALL SIGNATORIES.

5. WITH RESPECT TO THE WATERS BETWEEN THE SVALBARD AND NORTHERN NORWAY, VINE DESCRIBED THE NORWEGIAN POSITION ON THE CONTINENTAL SHELF AND THE RESERVATIONS WHICH VARIOUS COUNTRIES, INCLUDING THE UNITED STATES, HAD LODGED CONCERNING THE APPLICABILITY OF THE SPITSBERGEN ECONOMIC REGIME TO THE SVALBARD CONTINENTAL SHELF. HERE THE CENTRAL ISSUE WAS THE QUESTION OF POTENTIAL HYDROCARBON RESOURCES IN THOSE WATERS AND THE EXTENT TO WHICH THEIR EXPLOITATION UNDER A SPITSBERGEN REGIME WOULD INTRODUCE DESTABILIZING FACTORS. WE HAD ADDRESSED THIS AT SOME LENGTH IN OUR STUDY.

6. THE THIRD ISSUE, THE CONTINENTAL SHELF TALKS BETWEEN NORWAY AND THE USSR, WAS, WE FOUND, ONE IN WHICH US INTERESTS WERE ONLY PERIPHERALLY INVOLVED.

7. VINE INDICATED THAT WHEN THE RESULTS OF OUR STUDY WERE FINALLY APPROVED, WE WOULD PROBABLY WISH TO CONSULT FURTHER WITH NORWAY AND WITH THOSE COUNTRIES WHICH HAD CONFIDENTIAL

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EXPRESSED AN INTEREST IN EXPLORING THE ISSUE FURTHER LIKE THE FRG AND THE UK. IT WAS TOO EARLY AT THIS TIME TO INDICATE WHAT FORM THOSE TALKS MIGHT TAKE. WE WOULD CLEARLY WISH TO DISCUSS THIS FIRST WITH THE NORWEGIANS AND VINE ASKED THAT THE FRG CONSIDER THIS BRIEF TOUR DE HORIZON AS SENSITIVE UNTIL WE HAD HAD THE OPPORTUNITY FURTHER TO DISCUSS IT WITH THE NORWEGIANS. INGERSOLL

UNQUOTE
KISSINGER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: SOVEREIGNTY, LAW OF THE SEA, CONTINENTAL SHELF, FOREIGN RELATIONS, SVALBARD
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 10 MAR 1976
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ElyME
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976STATE050303
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: JJCROWLEY
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760090-0216
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760375/aaaacoab.tel
Line Count: 117
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ElyME
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 27 APR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <27 APR 2004 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <20 AUG 2004 by ElyME>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: THE SVALBARD
TAGS: PFOR, SV, UR, NO, GE
To: LONDON
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006